

# Tune in



HERMIT'S  
CAVE

"Turn Out  
Your Lights"

## IS THIS ANY WAY TO RUN A FANZINE?

Welcome to the 16th issue of TUNE IN, which comes after a considerable delay (nearly a year) from when the previous issue appeared, and for which I offer my apologies to all subscribers. TUNE IN has always had trouble keeping to its supposed bimonthly frequency, but this has been the longest span between two issues, caused by my other commitments. And since keeping a bimonthly schedule looks impossible for me to maintain, I have decided to simply publish TUNE IN whenever I have the time to do so, probably two or three times a year.

I could have simply cancelled TUNE IN, but I decided that OTR fandom still really needs the kind of forum and perspectives that this magazine offers. TUNE IN uniquely focuses on the details of a show's history, as witness the listings of NY TIMES dates for "The Witch's Tale" in this issue. TUNE IN uniquely gives focus to the wider world beyond America where radio drama may still thrive (witness last issue) and uniquely addresses the question of the artistic merit of shows, not simply their nostalgic value. TUNE IN uniquely permits readers to express their creativity through scripts and uniquely allows them to express their opinion at length in letter-pages (unfortunately, not too many folks have taken advantage of the latter). And finally, TUNE IN is published in a magazine format (few OTR zines are), stapled in the center, with a front and back cover, and has occasionally run over forty pages -- usually thicker than any OTR zine I've ever seen -- for a reasonable price. I'm not trying to sound like a commercial here; I'm giving the reasons why I decided not to cancel TUNE IN. Weighing all the above, I knew that for me, as an OTR fan, I wanted a zine that did all that TUNE IN does. Because its worth doing and no other zine does it. And that's why I decided to keep TUNE IN going.

If any subscribers are unsatisfied with this change in frequency, I will return the amount they sent for the remaining issues of their subscription. My thanks to those with whom I exchange newsletters, who have graciously kept sending me copies during this delay. I have decided, however, to end all my newsletter-trades for the foreseeable future in fairness to my fellow editors. To make up for the issues they have sent, they will receive the next few issues of TUNE IN.

Unfortunately, the lack of a regular frequency has caused me to abandon the notion of a regular column, begun last issue, devoted to new programs produced during the current year. I will, however, continue to inform readers about noteworthy new radio dramas in TUNE IN's pages. Also, I've recently printed a list of radio shows in my collection so that readers interested in many of the new shows covered last issue (and ones done since then) can obtain copies of them. I'm interested in expanding my collection of shows by trading on cassette with others, so if you would like to trade, I will send you my list in exchange for yours. Or the list can be purchased for \$1.50, to cover printing and mailing costs (the list is 40 pages, in TUNE IN's digest format).

And now that all that stuff is out of the way, let's get back to really discussing radio shows here....

1937  
October 12 — January 13  
1938

305 - 11/16/37

306 - 11/30/37

307 - 12/7/37

308 - 12/14/37

309 - 12/21/37

310 - 1/13/37

# The Witch's Tale

by  
Alonzo Deen Cole

- 10/14/37 - 301... The Haunted Crossroads  
10/19/37 - 302... Four Fingers and a Thumb  
10/26/37 - 303... All Hallow's Eve  
11/2/37 - 304... The House of the Bridegro  
- 305... Lord of the Jungle  
306... The House of the Bridegro  
307... The Power of Lucifer  
308... The Queen of Spades Rnd  
309... The Compact of Chester Rd.  
310... The Altar of Hate  
Extra... Four American Christmas  
13/24/37

Vol. 31

NUMBERS CCCI to CCCX

WITCH'S TALE Airdate Information: PART ONE, 1931-1933.  
 [Source: The New York Times, May 1931-Dec 1933]

This is the first Part of an attempt at a Witch's Tale "log." There are no story titles listed in this log, however (since few were given for this series in the NY TIMES), but a record of how many times The Witch's Tale aired according to the NY TIMES radio listings.

Usually the Sunday radio listings, which also gave the schedule for the whole upcoming week, were consistent with the actual listings on any particular day. Sometimes, however, changes were made. If the Sunday listings said The Witch's Tale would air Monday, and yet the actual Monday listings disagree, that information is provided below. Any corrections of this log, likewise, would be appreciated.

The remainder of the series will be listed in the remaining Part(s) of the log, which is nearly half completed at this time. This first Part was compiled by Rob Imes. The remaining Part(s), which will be printed in a future issue of TUNE IN, was compiled by Robert Schultz and Rob Imes.

<u>ep. #</u>	<u>date</u>	<u>day of week</u>	<u>time length</u>
1.)	May 28, 1931	Thursday	10:15 - 10:45 p.m.
	- [The Sunday, May 17 issue included The Witch's Tale in their listings for Thursday, May 21, and indicated that the program would air at 8:45- 9:15 p.m. The radio listings which appeared in the May 21 issue, however, scheduled "Recorded Program: Victor Herbert Memories" at 8:45 and "Government by Reprisal - W. Kingsland Macy" at 9 pm.]		
	- [The Sunday, May 31 issue included The Witch's Tale in their listings for Thursday, June 4, and indicated that the program would air at 10:30-10:45 p.m. The radio listings which appeared in the June 4 issue, however, did not include The Witch's Tale.]		
2.)	June 11, 1931	Thursday	10:15 - 10:45 p.m.
3.)	June 18, 1931	Thursday	10:15 - 10:45 p.m.
4.)	June 25, 1931	Thursday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
5.)	July 2, 1931	Thursday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
6.)	July 9, 1931	Thursday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
7.)	July 13, 1931	Monday	9:15 - 9:45 p.m.
8.)	July 20, 1931	Monday	9:15 - 9:45 p.m.
9.)	July 27, 1931	Monday	9:15 - 9:45 p.m.
10.)	Aug. 3, 1931	Monday	9:15 - 9:45 p.m.
11.)	Aug. 10, 1931	Monday	9:15 - 9:45 p.m.
12.)	Aug. 17, 1931	Monday	9:15 - 9:45 p.m.
	- [On Aug. 24 at 8:30 - 9 p.m. and 9:15 - 10:30 p.m., an "Anti-Gang Mass Meeting, Central Park" is listed instead of The Witch's Tale.]		
13.)	Aug. 27, 1931	Thursday	8:15 - 8:45 p.m.
14.)	Aug. 31, 1931	Monday	9:15 - 9:45 p.m.
	- [On Sept. 7, The Witch's Tale was not aired, replaced by "Symphony Orchestra at Central Park, Mall, Franz Kalterborn, Conductor."]		
15.)	Sept. 10, 1931	Thursday	8:30 - 9:00 p.m.
16.)	Sept. 14, 1931	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
	(The Sunday, Sept. 13 issue indicated that the Sept. 14 episode would air at 9:15 - 9:45 p.m.)		

- 17.) Sept. 21, 1931 Monday 9:30 - 9:45 p.m.  
*(Both the Sunday & Monday radio listings for Sept. 21 said the show would be on from 9:30 to 9:45, making this episode only 15 min. long.)*
- 18.) Sept. 28, 1931 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 19.) Oct. 5, 1931 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 20.) Oct. 12, 1931 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.  
*- [On Oct. 19, The Witch's Tale was not listed, and instead scheduled at 9:15 - 10 p.m. was a "Workers Dinner of Emergency Relief Committee; Speakers, Mayor Walker, George E. Vincent, Myron C. Taylor." A brief review of this special can be found in the Sunday, Oct. 25 NY Times.]*
- 21.) Oct. 26, 1931 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 22.) Oct. 31, 1931 Saturday 8:00 - 8:30 p.m.  
*(Aired on Saturday instead of Monday because Oct. 31 is Halloween.)*
- 23.) Nov. 9, 1931 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 24.) Nov. 16, 1931 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 25.) Nov. 23, 1931 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 26.) Nov. 30, 1931 Monday 9:45 - 10:00 p.m.  
*(The Sunday, Nov. 29 issue did not include The Witch's Tale in its listings for Nov. 30. The program was possibly shortened to make room for the political special airing before it.)*
- 27.) Dec. 7, 1931 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 28.) Dec. 14, 1931 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 29.) Dec. 21, 1931 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 30.) Dec. 28, 1931 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 31.) Jan. 4, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 32.) Jan. 11, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 33.) Jan. 18, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 34.) Jan. 25, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.  
*(listed as "The Witch's Tale - Skit"; often the show would be listed as "The Witch's Tale - Sketch," i.e., a dramatic sketch, but never a "skit")*
- 35.) Feb. 1, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.  
*(according to Sunday listings; no proper Monday listing)*
- 36.) Feb. 8, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.  
*(according to Sunday listings; no proper Monday listing)*
- 37.) Feb. 15, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 38.) Feb. 22, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 39.) Feb. 29, 1932 Monday 11:02 - 11:30 p.m.
- 40.) Mar. 7, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 41.) Mar. 14, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 9:45 p.m.  
*(both Sun. & Mon. listings indicate a 15-min. length for this episode)*
- 42.) Mar. 21, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 43.) Mar. 28, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.  
*(Both Sun. & Mon. listing say "The Witch's Tale - Drama; Brandt Orch." for this Mar 28 broadcast. "Brandt Orch." was occasionally listed under its own entry (without The Witch's Tale) at other times on WOR; for example, on 12-24-33 at 2:30-2:45pm & 1-7-34 at 5:15-5:30pm, "Brandt Orch." was scheduled.)*
- 44.) Apr. 4, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 45.) Apr. 11, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 46.) Apr. 18, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- 47.) Apr. 25, 1932 Monday 9:30 - 10:00 p.m.

48.)	May	2, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
49.)	May	9, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
50.)	May	16, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
51.)	May	23, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
52.)	May	30, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
53.)	June	6, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
54.)	June	13, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
- [not scheduled to air June 20, nor the remainder of June]				
55.)	July	4, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
56.)	July	11, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
57.)	July	18, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
58.)	July	25, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
59.)	Aug.	2, 1932	Tuesday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
(Moves briefly to Tuesday time slot, opposite the popular Ed Wynn comedy program)				
60.)	Aug.	9, 1932	Tuesday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
61.)	Aug.	16, 1932	Tuesday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
62.)	Aug.	23, 1932	Tuesday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
63.)	Aug.	30, 1932	Tuesday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
64.)	Sept.	5, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
65.)	Sept.	12, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
66.)	Sept.	19, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
67.)	Sept.	26, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
(not included in Sunday edition's listing for Monday)				
68.)	Oct.	3, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
69.)	Oct.	10, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
70.)	Oct.	17, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
71.)	Oct.	24, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
72.)	Oct.	31, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
(Sunday's listing for Monday has a speech by President Hoover scheduled instead.)				
73.)	Nov.	7, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
74.)	Nov.	14, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
75.)	Nov.	21, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
76.)	Nov.	28, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
77.)	Dec.	5, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
78.)	Dec.	12, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
79.)	Dec.	19, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
80.)	Dec.	26, 1932	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
81.)	Jan.	2, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
(Both Sun. & Mon. listings add "with Alonzo Deen Cole, Marie O'Flynn and others.")				
82.)	Jan.	9, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
83.)	Jan.	16, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
84.)	Jan.	23, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
85.)	Jan.	30, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
86.)	Feb.	6, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
87.)	Feb.	13, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
88.)	Feb.	20, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
89.)	Feb.	27, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
90.)	Mar.	6, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
91.)	Mar.	13, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
92.)	Mar.	20, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
93.)	Mar.	27, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
94.)	Apr.	3, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
95.)	Apr.	10, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.

96.)	Apr.	17, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
97.)	Apr.	24, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
98.)	May	1, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
99.)	May	8, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
100.)	May	15, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
101.)	May	22, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
102.)	May	29, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
103.)	June	5, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
104.)	June	12, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
105.)	June	19, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
106.)	June	26, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
107.)	July	3, 1933	Monday	9:30 - 10:00 p.m.
108.)	July	10, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.

(Sunday paper has Witch's Tale scheduled for 9:30-10pm; but Monday's paper has a program called "Television" w/ U.A. Sanabria; Nancy Garner, Soprano; and Ross Peardon, Baritone scheduled from 9:30-9:45pm and Witch's Tale airing after it at 9:45-10:15pm.)

109.)	July	17, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
110.)	July	24, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
111.)	July	31, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
112.)	Aug.	7, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
113.)	Aug.	14, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
114.)	Aug.	21, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
115.)	Aug.	28, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
116.)	Sept.	4, 1933	Monday	7:00 - 7:30 p.m.
117.)	Sept.	11, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
118.)	Sept.	18, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
119.)	Sept.	25, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
120.)	Oct.	2, 1933	Monday	10:00 - 10:15 p.m.

(Sunday listings have it scheduled for 9:45 - 10:15 p.m.)

121.)	Oct.	9, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
122.)	Oct.	16, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
123.)	Oct.	23, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
124.)	Oct.	30, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
125.)	Nov.	8, 1933	Wednesday	10:30 - 11:00 p.m.

(Sunday listings had "Market and Halsey Street Playhouse" scheduled for this time.)

126.)	Nov.	13, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
127.)	Nov.	20, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
128.)	Nov.	28, 1933	Tuesday	8:45 - 9:15 p.m.

(Sunday listings had Witch's Tale scheduled for its usual Monday time, but the Monday Nov 27 listings had "Our Monetary Policy - Father Charles Coughlin, Speaking From Hippodrome" scheduled for that slot instead.)

129.)	Dec.	4, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.
130.)	Dec.	11, 1933	Monday	9:45 - 10:15 p.m.

- [Witch's Tale was scheduled to air Dec. 25, at 9:45 - 10:15 p.m., according to the Sunday Dec. 24 listings. The Dec. 25 paper, however, listed "Dance Orch." airing then instead.]

- [Witch's Tale was scheduled to air Jan. 1, at 9:45 - 10:15 p.m., according to the Sunday Dec. 31 listings. The Jan. 1 paper, however, listed "Dance Band" airing then instead.]

\*\*\*\*\* END OF PART ONE \*\*\*\*\*

### SOME INFORMATION GLEANED FROM

"Alonzo Deen Cole and *The Witch's Tale* Magazine" by Sam Moskowitz, as published in the eleventh issue of the pulp magazine fanzine Pulp Vault, June 1993, Tattered Pages Press. Doug Ellis, editor and publisher. compiled by Shawn Danowski

*NOTE: Sam Moskowitz is well known for his in-depth research with regards to science-fiction and fantasy genres. While he is not infallible, he gets his facts straight or does not use the information. Some of the following contradicts what has been written before by other fans of this program. Therefore, if you can offer proof to the contrary about anything that follows, please do contact Rob Imes, myself, or Tune In. Thank you!*

*My own comments, if any, follow in italics in parenthesis, prefaced by a "SD."*

- Cole was *not* paid for "Spirits of The Lake," the story which appeared in the November 1941 issue of the pulp magazine *Weird Tales*; he was, however, paid \$50.00 for "The Gypsy's Hand," which appeared in the May 1942 issue of the same title. Cole apparently offered his submission *gratis* to see if the magazine would be interested. They were at first, apparently, for Cole's name was prominently displayed on the cover of the Nov. issue; but there was no cover mention on the May issue, indicating less interest among both editor and readers. The experiment appears to have failed. See my article in Tune In # 11 )
- Jan. 1934 issue of *Fantasy Magazine* reports that Cole was "married to his leading lady, Adelaide Fitzallen." (SD--*I find this hard to believe. There was a 40 year age difference, which means little, but if this was true, why has it never been mentioned before? Or has it been mentioned and I missed it?*) But this remark is seconded by Cole's agent in later years: Charles Michelson, the same man who guided *The Shadow* and other programs into syndication. Michelson stated that, "Nancy, on the program, was his first wife."
- The May 28, 1938 issue of *The Science-Fiction Newsletter* contains a report by one Richard Wilson which states that "Marie O'Flynn, feminine lead of *The Witch's Tale* is the wife of Alonzo." (SD--*Myself, I've never heard of any O'Flynn as Nancy; maybe Wilson meant that O'Flynn was playing the non-Nancy feminine leads. Cole could have been married to her, if he was married first to Fitzallen, because the latter died in 1935. But Moskowitz talked with Cole's second wife during preparation for this article, so this appears to be a piece of misinformation on Wilson's part.*)
- Cole made transcriptions of his show for distribution to 130 radio stations, but his agent, Michelson, had none, though he did admit to possessing bound volumes of *The Witch's Tale* scripts. Michelson revealed that station WOR possessed the disks of the first 52 *Witch's Tale* programs. For whatever reason, Michelson also forbade Cole's widow Dorothea to give out any information or interviews.
- Cole was born February 22, 1897 in Minnesota to Daniel Cole and Grace McHenry (maiden name).
- Cole had worked in vaudeville. He was 34 when *The Witch's Tale* first aired in 1931, but that same year he had attempted (unsuccessfully) to interest radio stations in a vaudeville-style comedy program he dubbed, "Darling and Dearie," subtitled "The Honeymooners." Cole had penned 10 installments as a radio serial with the content derived from a vaudeville act in which Cole had written and starred.
- In late 1936, Cole was residing at 16 Lincoln Ave., Mt. Vernon, NY. He later moved to Glendale, CA.
- In 1937, Cole prepared an outline for a radio serial he called *The Wanderer*." This proposal ran 26 pages, which, we surmise, included an outline and a sample script.
- Cole also wrote for the 1943-1950 radio program, Flashgun Casey.
- Cole also wrote and directed a "weird drama" titled "The Man With The Invisible Wound" on the *Kate Smith Show* of December 5, 1941. Edmund Gwen was the star.
- Between 1954-56, Cole was a member of the Writer's Guild of America.



- Cole passed away on March 31, 1971 of "acute coronary occlusion" at memorial Hospital of Glendale in Glendale, CA, and is buried at Grand View Memorial Park there.
- Dorothea George Cole was Cole's second wife and widow. Dorothea is "about" 21 years Cole's junior.
- The April-May 1932 issue of *The Time Traveler*--a contemporary fan publication whose editor knew Cole--listed the followed works of fiction by other authors (as opposed to be Cole's own work) which had already been adapted to the program: *Frankenstein*, *Rappacini's Daughter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Facts In the case of M. Valdemar* by E.A. Poe, and an "unspecified" story by Antole France. Other stories which were adaptations included "The Devil and Tom Walker" by Stephen Vincent Benet (aired Sept. 21, 1934) and *Faust* (aired in two parts, November 15 and 22, 1934). In 1937, the following classics were adapted: "The Corsican Brothers" by A. Dumas; "A Strange Story" by E. Bulwere-Lytton; *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* by R.L. Stevenson. "Queen of Spades" by Alexander Pushkin was aired in 1938.
- The following were aired and copyrighted in 1934: "The House of Gargoyles," "The Puzzle," "Devil hands," "A Happy Ending," "The Alchemist," "The Great White Wolf," and "Physician To The Dead." These were all copyrighted out of offices at 477 West 14th Street, New York City, later 53 Hamilton Terrace, New York City.
- Cole was at first conscientious in copyrighting his plays, but grew erratic later on. In 1937, he copyrighted, "among others," the following: "The Cage," "The Caretaker," "The Treasure of Astane," "The Sword," "The Glowbe Secret," "The Operator," "Fallon's Folly," "The Scar," "The Tenant," "The Sign of The Peacock," and "The Genius." In 1938 he copyrighted "Four Fingers and A Thumb," "Lord of the Jungle," "The Dead Bring Death," "The Grail and The Spear," and "The Snake." The last was number 328 and copyrighted September 29, 1938, "and may have represented the end of the series."
- Mort Weisinger, later to be known for his work in comics during the Golden Age," wrote in the August 1932 issue of *The Time Traveler*: "Alonzo Deen Cole, the director, author, and leading character of WOR's *The Witch's tale*, has informed us that, out of the 49 presentations already given, only 17 were dramatized versions of original works (he meant adaptations of classic stories.) Practically all of the programs have been created by Mr. Cole....At any rate, those fans missing this weekly feature are cheating themselves out of unrivaled entertainment."
- At least one story appearing on the radio show was not written by Cole. Richard Sale had written "Snake House," according to a report in the April 1934 issue of *The Fantasy Magazine*. Sale was at this time a prolific detective fiction pulp writer. He later graduated to hardcover novels, then writer and director of movie and TV. He was still active in that arena at the time of his death a few years back (1991-92, I believe). In addition to the two aforementioned *Weird Tales* contributions, Cole also placed a fiction version of "Snake House" in the July 1935 issue of the pulp magazine *Mystery Novels Magazine*. However, there is some doubt as to whether Cole wrote it as Cole rarely sold fiction to magazines of any kind. The better bet is that Sale ghost-wrote the story under the Cole byline. (SD-- That Cole was a poor prose writer is confirmed by his two stories for *Weird Tales*; to my mind, this makes it all the more likely that he would have had someone write "The Snake" for him.)
- Maurice Ingher, editor of the fan publication *Science Fiction Digest*, declared of the show, "On a par with any tales appearing in any of the magazines."
- On December 30, 1937, the program had aired "The Compact of Charles Rand," described thus in the weekly "news sheet" *The Science-Fiction Newsletter*: a man bargains with Dr. Magic, a magician who has supernatural powers. The news sheet later reported that on January 22, 1938, the episode "The Dead Bring Death" has been aired at 11:15pm EST and that Cole had played the part of a "weird character," Dr. Cathedral O'Ryan.

ADDITIONAL NOTES by ROBERT SCHULTZ,  
ON SAM MOSKOWITZ'S "WITCH'S TALE" ARTICLE

---

[This article presents short quotes from the actual article, in italics, followed by Mr. Schultz's brief comments relating to the quoted material.]

*"The Witch's Tale...frequently shifted to a later hour... when a program or a special event paid for its time slot."* (paragraph 4)

This is evident from the research done from the New York Times newspaper. The newspaper was searched for the time slots at which the program aired. The program frequently moved to a later time slot or a different night due to special programming, as indicated in the newspaper listings.

*"Cole's wife, Adelaide Fitzallen, played the feminine lead in many of the broadcasts."* (paragraph 6)

If Adelaide Fitzallen was indeed Cole's wife, she did not seem to be a lead in the stories. Every now and then Adelaide's "Nancy" voice was heard when an extra female voice was needed. Two examples of this are "The Wonderful Bottle" and "The Werewolf." It seems unlikely that Adelaide Fitzallen changed her voice to play the lead female roles in stories.

*"The Time Traveller for April-May, 1932 revealed that The Witch's Tale had already presented adaptations of Frankenstein..."* (paragraph 6)

A California old-time radio collector claims to have once had the original transcription disc in his possession. He claims that the disc said 1931 on it for "The Witch's Tales Story" of "Frankenstein."

*"In 1937 classics offered were...Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. 'Queen of Spades'...appeared in 1938."* (paragraph 6)

"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" was presented on August 26, 1937 as the NY Times listed it. The story "The Queen of Spades" was aired on December 31, 1937.

*"The last title was numbered 328 and copyrighted September 29, 1938 and may have represented the end of the series."* (paragraph 8)

Recent research done through the NY Times listed June 13, 1938 as the last weekly broadcast listing for which the Witch's Tale aired. The listings no longer continued to list the program as being aired beyond June of 1938 or for the rest of 1938. It seems that last show of June 13, 1938 was approximately #328 or #330 in the series. (Pretty much accurate give or take one or two shows.)

*"On December 30, 1937, they had presented 'The Compact of Chester Rand'..."* (paragraph 14)

The NY Times list the December 30 broadcast as being only 15 minutes long. Furthermore, Dave Siegel has a listing of some Witch's Tale scripts with air dates. The list puts the broadcast for "The Compact

of Chester Rand" as being aired on January 6, 1938. As it turns out, The NY Times does not list a broadcast of Jan. 6, 1938, due to other programming.

"There is a contradiction in the fan magazine reports of Cole's first marriage that has never been adequately clarified. Fantasy Magazine for January, 1934 stated that he was "married to his leading lady Adelaide Fitzallen." This report would have come directly from Cole to Mort Weisinger. However, Richard Wilson writing for The Science Fiction News-Letter for May 28, 1938 offered the information that "Marie O'Flynn, feminine lead of Witch's Tale is wife of the author Alonzo." His agent of later years Charles Michelson said "Nancy, on the program was his first wife," and we know she was Fitzallen." (p.41)

If Cole's wife was Adelaide Fitzallen in 1934, why was this not made known in her obituary, when she died in 1935?

"...Cole's widow and second wife Dorothea George Cole..." (p. 41)

If indeed Dorothea George Cole was Alonzo's second wife, then which one (Adelaide Fitzallen or Marie O'Flynn) was Cole married to first?

\*\*\*\*\*

#### ADDITIONAL NOTES by Rob Imes (on the Moskowitz article)

Moskowitz quotes from an August 1932 publication indicating that the show was at that time on episode #49 ("out of the 49 presentations given already"). The NY Times listings, however, suggest that the show was on episode #49 in May of that year, and was closer to #60 by August, when the publication presumably appeared.

Paragraph 14 of Moskowitz's article mentions that a Jan. 8, 1938 newsletter said The Witch's Tale was "appearing on the Mutual Network, Thursday evenings at 10:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time." The NY Times listings confirm that the show moved to that day and time on December 30, 1937, but as often happened with the show, the schedule was soon changed. A month after the newsletter appeared, the show was moved to an 8:30 time slot, and by March it had moved to Tuesdays. At the end of April, it was coming on Mondays. Little wonder that the show appears to have been cancelled a short time later (June 13), given the inconsistent scheduling it had at this time.

In the same paragraph, Moskowitz writes: "In [Richard Wilson's Science Fiction News-Letter] edition of January 22, 1938 he informed that "The Dead Bring Death" had appeared at 11:15 p.m. Eastern Standard Time." In other words, "The Dead Bring Death" episode appeared BEFORE Jan. 22 (the date of the magazine). As noted above, from Dec. 30, 1937 to Feb. 3, 1938, the show aired at 10pm. However, one episode, the Jan. 20, 1938 show, was listed as airing from 11:00pm to 11:45pm, although it would be preceded by a news broadcast. Therefore, The Witch's Tale must have come on at 11:15pm on Jan 20, just as Richard Wilson said it did. (My thanks to Robert Schultz for researching and compiling the NY Times airdates for 1937 and 1938.) Furthermore, Dave Siegel's listing of titles from 10/12/37 to 1/20/38 has "The Dead Bring Death" listed as episode #311, airing on Jan. 20, 1938, confirming Wilson's account.

[Sam Moskowitz's article appeared in PULP VAULT #11 (Tattered Pages Press, 6942 N. Oleander Ave., Chicago, IL 60631).]

NOTES by Rob Imes (on a 1983 "Witch's Tale" article by Lawrence Rao)

-----

In the November 1983 issue of *Radiotext*, a preview issue of The Old Time Radio Club of New York's newsletter, a 2-page article by Lawrence Rao about "The Witch's Tale" appeared. (My thanks to Dave Siegel for providing me with a copy.) In this article, Mr. Rao offered some information I had not read elsewhere and some of which contradicts information obtained from other sources (including the NY TIMES listings in this issue). Mr. Rao did not give sources or footnotes for where he acquired this information.

Paragraph 3 of his article states that the show was "first syndicated in 1931" and "was written and produced by Alonzo Dean Cole" [his spelling]. "Broadcast initially twice each week, stories were complete in two 15 minute portions which were usually heard Monday and Wednesday nights at 7:30 PM." This contradicts the information in the NY Times radio listings, which have the show airing usually on Mondays in half-hour segments. Also, the only time it aired on a Wednesday during its first three years, according to the NY Times, was on Nov. 8, 1933. The NY Times also has the show airing most nights at 9:30, not 7:30 PM. Clearly, however, the recordings of early shows are segmented into two 15m portions, as mentioned in TUNE IN #11 & 12. On April 23, 1933, the NY TIMES reported "Up until Feb. 1, 1932, the Federal Radio Commission ruling called for announcement of call letters and location of station each fifteen minutes." But, as mentioned before, Nancy should have told her listeners she'd be back shortly, not "next time." Perhaps the shows were syndicated in different formats in different places. Looking at the radio listings for the series in other newspapers and cities (away from WOR) might clear up this confusion.

Rao's article adds: "All the episodes were studio recorded on electrical transcriptions by J.G. Byers of the Byers Recording Laboratory, New York City. When originally broadcast in New York City, the series was sponsored by Macy's Department Store. The Witch's Tale was one of the few popular network programs that was not broadcast live over the air. ... Syndicated to networks and local stations alike, The Witch's Tale enjoyed a season or two on CBS. But its greatest air glory spanned 1935-1938 when it was broadcast on Tuesday nights by Mutual." Roger Bower is credited as director, Rao says, but many believe series creator/scripter Cole "actually directed (either in whole or part)... a considerable number of broadcasts." Cole also wrote for later shows like *Counterspy*, according to Rao, and "was a frequent contributor to many mystery/horror pulp magazines of the day."

Rao adds that "The Hairy Monster" and "The Bronze Venus" were later adapted (with some rewriting) on CBS RADIO MYSTERY THEATER, as "The Ghostly Private Eye" (12-26-74) and "The Venus d'llie" (4-30-74) respectively.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON "THE WITCH'S TALE"...

In TUNE IN #12, I mentioned that Frank Brady's biography of Orson Welles said Welles first read "War of the Worlds" in a magazine called "The Witch's Tales," a few years before he did the story on radio. Shawn Danowski reports that "War of the Worlds" was not among the stories published in the two 1936 issues of The Witch's Tale pulp magazine.... Adelaide Fitzallen's name (or variations of her last name) appears in a few stage reviews published in the NY Times Theatre Review book series (which reprints old reviews that originally appeared in the newspaper). Also, an actor named "Deen Cole" is listed in a review.

# One of Detroit's early radio voices

BY CHARLOTTE CRAIG  
Free Press Staff Writer

Thomas (Toby) Gremmer, an early broadcaster with radio station WJR, died Sunday in South Macomb Hospital, Warren, He was 100.

The hermit of WJR's "Hermit's Cave" program in the 1930s, Mr. Gremmer also played parts in other early Detroit area radio programs, including "The Lone Ranger" and "The Green Hornet" on WXYZ and "The Detroit News Radio Extra" on WWJ.

He entered broadcasting in 1929 after a vaudeville career with his wife, singer Edah Carr Delbridge, that took them from coast to coast and into local theaters, including the old Colonial in Detroit and the RKO in Ferndale. Mrs. Gremmer died in 1952.

Mr. Gremmer was Michigan's oldest surviving veteran of the Spanish-American War. Born in Bainbridge, Ga., in 1881, he celebrated his 100th birthday on March 5 and received commendation letters from President Reagan and Gov. Milliken.

"HE WAS a showman all the way, and even did a little soft shoe at his birthday party," said his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Richard Delbridge of Huntington Woods.

"He was a fine, gentle man," remembers Rubin Weiss of Oak Park, a performer who worked with Mr. Gremmer. "I was a young actor at the time — in the early '40s — and he was very kind and very helpful. He was about 80," said Weiss.

Mr. Gremmer had lived at the Fraser Villa Residential Center in Fraser after being injured in a car accident five years ago.

He survived by a stepson, Richard Delbridge, two grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Funeral services will be at 1 p.m. Thursday at Sawyer-Fuller Funeral Home, 2125 Twelve Mile Road, Berkeley. Burial will be in White Chapel Cemetery, Troy.



Thomas (Toby) Gremmer: "He was a showman all the way, and even did a little soft shoe at his birthday party."

September 13, 1995

Rob Imes  
1844 East Longmeadow  
Trenton, MI 48183

Dear Rob:

Enclosed are copies of the only information I have regarding Hermit's Cave. Much of the historical information was destroyed by water damage in our storage facilities and we do not have dates, etc. about the program.

However, I would suggest you write to Charles Michelson at 9350 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90212. Telephone number is 213 278-4546. He syndicates many old time radio programs and perhaps he will be able to give you more information.

Sincerely,

Fran Ehlers  
Network Director/  
Programming Administrator

The Hermit's Cave—Sunday night... Sponsored by Carter Coal Co., written and produced by Geraldine Elliott and Eric Howlett, WJR staff writers... Each program a complete episode... requests for admission to broadcast far beyond capacity of studios each week... a guest appearance at WGAR, Cleveland, resulted in more requests for seats than for a well-known network show... Forty thousand fans asked for pictures of cast in response to two announcements... show presented for week on stage at Fox theater in Detroit... many requests to have certain episodes repeated... unusual amount of mail response from towns usually considered outside WJR territory... also broadcast part of year through WGAR, Cleveland; WKRC, Cincinnati; WSPT, South Bend.

A DIVISION OF CAPITAL CITIES/ABC, INC.  
2100 FISHER BUILDING • DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48202 (313) 875-4440

**WJR**  
AM 760

WABEEK STATE BANK

THE HERMIT'S CAVE  
A MYSTERY THRILLER  
PRODUCED AND WRITTEN BY  
ERIC HOWLETT  
GERALDINE ELLIOT  
WJR  
SUNDAY 10:30 PM



**BLAST FROM THE PAST: A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF RADIO'S FIRST 75 YEARS**  
by B. Eric Rhoads (Streamline Publ., 800-226-7857; 1995; \$39.99)

*Reviewed by Rob Imes*

I'm always amused whenever I see a clip of the latest "Planet Hollywood" ceremony on TV, where a worthless prop from some lousy new movie is added to the restaurant's collection. On the background wall in such scenes, one sees a montage of Hollywood's past: poster cut-outs of Gloria Swanson and Bette Davis hobnob with the Terminator and Rambo, as if to suggest that today's offerings are simply a logical continuation of what came before. It is an association based on geography, not a similar spirit or quality, meant to backslap the current industry.

Well, reading B. Eric Rhoads' **BLAST FROM THE PAST** reminded me of that. It is a salute to the industry of American radio, decade by decade from the primitive 1920s to the personalities of today. The book is not critical of the industry for the lack of drama on American radio today (and does not compare our lack of it to another country's abundance of it to refute arguments that the artform is dead), and so the reader must infer that American radio's present state is the result of natural evolution -- no better or worse than what came before.

Since the book doesn't explicitly say that it is only a history of the American experience, readers might assume that radio consists entirely of DJ music or talk shows today. Rhoads ignores the fact that radio dramatizations are still presented regularly over the BBC (mentioned only three times, and not after 1930) and the CBC (not mentioned at all). This lack of a wider, global perspective results in distortions and omissions of a performer's involvement with radio -- particularly noticeable in relation to the Beatles (who are mentioned five times in the book). None of the four Beatles photos in the book (one on the cover) has anything to do with the Beatles own 1960s BBC radio series (Pop Go The Beatles during 1963, From Us To You in 1964) and their many appearances on other BBC music radio programs like Saturday Club. Indeed, all that is entirely ignored in this book, presumably since the shows were aired overseas, not here. A few years ago, this omission would be understandable, but since then some of their performances on these shows have been released on a best-selling Beatles album called "Live at the BBC." (Another BBC radio track appeared on Beatles Anthology Vol. One.) A photo of the Beatles before the BBC microphones (as seen in the "Live at the BBC" booklet) would have been far more appropriate in **BLAST FROM THE PAST** than, say, the large photo of them on the Ed Sullivan TV show (p.315) or the large photo of the crowd at a Beatles concert (p.322). If I had to include the Beatles at all in a radio book, I'd at least mention their own radio series, especially now that American audiences are aware of it because of "Live at the BBC." Other rock groups such as Led Zeppelin, Queen, and XTC have had their BBC radio performances released to the American public on cassette and CD. In this ever-shrinking world, omissions of this kind become increasingly noticeable.

The denial of radio drama's durability in other countries, especially England, presents a bleaker portrait of the artform

than reality supports. A blanket statement like "November 1960 saw the last of the radio soap operas fade into oblivion" (p.304), without acknowledging exceptions, results in inaccurate generalizations. "The Archers," a BBC radio soap opera, debuted in 1951 and has been aired every weekday since, to the present day. "The Archers," of course, is not mentioned in the book.

It would be one thing if the book was titled AMERICAN RADIO'S FIRST 75 YEARS, but it isn't. It presents itself as a general history of all radio. The omission of important radio programs outside the U.S. is as annoying to me as books about "science-fiction on TV" which completely ignore the long-running Doctor Who (because it's British) or silent-movie tomes which ignore the likes of Gance, Eisenstein, and Murnau. The value of this oft-omitted stuff is that it usually acts to counteract generalizations, presenting an alternative direction or viewpoint instead of following the trend. It opens our eyes (or ears, in this case). After having it drilled into your head that This Is The Way It Is (and BLAST FROM THE PAST contributes to the drilling here), a wider perspective allows one to realize that It Ain't Necessarily So. My own feeling is that today's American radio would pale considerably in comparison to the offerings of today's BBC and the reader would realize that the spirit of the latter more naturally conforms to the spirit of radio's Golden Age than the personalities profiled in the last half of BLAST FROM THE PAST. Too bad that comparison is so rarely made (and in Rhoads' book, of course, not ever made).

On the positive side, the book presents numerous photos of favorite radio performers -- the book is mostly photos, in fact. I especially enjoyed page 147, which features photos of "The Green Hornet" cast. I'd always wondered what Lenore Case and Mike Axford really looked like. Other great photos: "The Gold Spot Pals" (p.68) which is described as "an early NBC equivalent to The Little Rascals"; Orson Welles with a beard and pipe (p.160); Groucho without his moustache (p.207); the Dragon Lady in "Terry and the Pirates" (p.230); Bret Morrison as The Shadow (p.271), among others. Even some of the photos from more recent years are interesting, such as the old photos of Howard Stern, although the shots of movies and TV shows which had actors playing radio hosts (WKRP, Frasier, etc.) could have been eliminated. Also, because of radio's localized nature, the reader is greeted either by faces he is too familiar with ("I never saw so many pictures of Casey Kasem") or has never heard of, especially if one lives outside New York or Los Angeles. (Even big names like Stern and Don Imus are not heard in my own Detroit area.) "Who are all these bozos?" one of my friends asked while flipping through the book's last half.

To Rhoads' credit, he also includes a list of organizations and publications (including TUNE IN) associated with the medium, so that readers can get more involved. John Dunning's book, often included in the bibliographies of many important biographies, should include such a list in his new edition.

BLAST FROM THE PAST is valuable mainly for its photos. Its linking of radio's past with its present is disappointing in its lack of discrimination, in this audioplay fan's view. Shows which conform more to the spirit of the Golden Age belong here, and so their omission is unfortunate.



## **Some Notes, Suggested by an Anthology, On Radio Writing as a Serious Art** by John K. Hutchens (*reprinted from NY TIMES, 1940s*)

Since genius or even talent is not a matter of dollars and cents, not all the wealth of the radio industry can evoke successful works at will, an artistic failing not unknown to the legitimate theatre, the cinema and the book publishing businesses. The wonder is that radio has in its short life accounted for so many of them. It was born under high pressure, subject to all the confusion and uncertainties thereof and, also, to the limitations of a medium that must appeal to a vast and varied public if it is to exist at all. But here it is, after only twenty-one years, an art form -- distinctive, powerful, subtle, altogether tremendous in its possibilities. That is something you are apt to forget in the welter of shop talk, the commercial trimmings.

### **The Infant Art**

In point of fact, the radio as a dramatic art is only five years old, as Norman S. Weiser points out in the introduction to his excellent new "Writer's Radio Theatre, 1940-41" (Harper & Brothers), a collection of ten outstanding radio plays, most of them from the past season. It was as recently as 1936 that the Columbia Broadcasting System led the way with the Columbia Workshop, training writers, developing techniques that would satisfy the demands peculiar to a new form and a new audience. That the writers and methods developed by Columbia and later by other networks were successful, and that the five brief years were rich in accomplishment, there can be no doubt. It has been apparent from year to year, and now Mr. Weiser's collection testifies to it again. "Seems Radio Is Here to Stay," as the title of Norman Corwin's famous "verse-brochure" could say without fear of contradiction.

Mr. Corwin's play is, of course, one of the ten included here. The others are "Red Death," by Ruth Barth; "Man-Made Waterways," by Hans Christian Adamson; "Ben Hur," by Elpha A. Ellington; "Mr. Ginsburg," by Arch Oboler; "Kathryn Howard," by Jean Holloway; "Words Without Music," by Mr. Corwin; "Bid for Happiness," by Therese Lewis and Lota Kriendler; "Plain Mr. President," by Dwight Irving Cooke; and "The Ghost Walks Again," by Jerry Devine. And there is an honor roll of seventeen others, and there must have been many more that were almost as good (the three major networks devoted 9,000 hours to drama in 1940, Mr. Weiser says); but the ten assembled in this volume suffice to make the point, which is that radio writing can be as varied, dramatic and rich in character -- though not as daring in certain other respects -- as the writing in any other branch of the theatre. There is a deal of complaint -- and justly so -- about the radio's run-of-the-mill material, but any medium that can offer such a record of creativeness as this is artistically sound.

### **Showcase**

For reasons of balance Mr. Weiser has seen to it that his anthology is as representative as possible -- it ranges from a radio version of "Ben Hur" to the horripilation induced by "The Shadow" -- but all of the samples in his showcase have certain characteristics in common. The writing is swift and sharp. The action has the mobility of the films. The characterization is incisive. There is a craftsmanlike sense of economy without any

suggestion that the material was arbitrarily cut to meet the stern requirements of the clock, which in most of these dramas was set for half an hour.

Like most highly selective writing, it looks easier than, of course, it is. It roams through time and space with astounding facility, giving you the stuff of a long novel in thirty minutes of quick scenes, flash-backs, summary narration, as in "Bid for Happiness," which starred Helen Hayes in the story of an actress whose career and marriage clashed; or "Plain Mr. President," which is both a sketch about Washington's inauguration and a picture in miniature of the heroism of the American Revolution; or "Man-Made Waterways," at once a stirring and an amusing account of the building of the Erie Canal.

Others of the plays are more concentrated in form, presenting a single episode, such as the last hours of Henry VIII's Kathryn Howard, or telling a story as seen by a single character, such as Arch Oboler's "Mr. Ginsburg," the tale of a small-time, conscience-stricken prize-fight manager. And all of them read remarkably well, which is only natural, because as a medium the radio is closer to the written page than are other and more visual arts.

## Set Your Own Stage

And that is a curious thing -- that the radio, most popular of entertainment mediums, should ask more imagination of its public than the theatre and the films do. Its product is not simply put on a stage or screen, to be taken or left; the listening audience must contribute actively to it. And although, as Mr. Weiser admits, "this requires imaginative powers that some of the audience may lack," he also finds evidence that "the great majority of the listeners have been educated, during the last few years, to build for themselves the mind pictures suggested by the words spoken by unseen casts of actors" -- and by the sound effects engineers, who are to the radio what a scenic designer is to the stage.

That is enormously encouraging. So is the apparent great interest in the development of new writers, for whom there are now radio courses in "approximately 350 high schools and colleges," Mr. Weiser says. No more than one in a thousand will be a Corwin or an Oboler, for the same reason that successors to the mantle of Eugene O'Neill do not exactly pour out of drama schools. But the interest and the high excitement are there, mirroring the opportunities of a new and limitless field, and that is what matters.

## It Takes Time

There are reasons, chiefly economic, why new writers do not come into radio as quickly as they might. The financial inducements are not great until a writer has become a "name," and that takes time, whereas in the theatre an author may establish his fortune and his reputation with a single play. But out of the multitude who are trying there should emerge a nucleus who may be depended upon for good and steady work. In the meantime the radio -- like the theatre -- could very well fall back upon more revivals: any or all of the plays in this volume, for instance, or return engagements of other proven items, such as Mr. Corwin's charming fantasy, "The Odyssey of Runyon Jones," which came back a week ago this evening.

But all this column started out to say was that things are looking up, as Mr. Weiser's volume indicates and as you may discover for yourself with a little patience and some discriminating dialing.

# LET WRITERS WRITE

by Norman Rosten (*Reprinted from NY TIMES, Sunday, July 15, 1945*)

I am not an authority on radio writing. Nobody is. It's all done with mirrors and almost anyone can set up shop who knows what a segue, cross-fade or montage is, and can put sentences together with moderate skill. For such is the kingdom. There has been, however, some talk lately of the "literature" of radio and I should like to say a few humble words in this connection. Those of us, including myself, who have worked in the media of poetry, drama, or the novel as well as in radio, know that radio is the sheerest caricature of art. Most of radio writing is polemic or melodrama when it is not merely nonsense, and most serious writers have chosen to stay in their rooms and write books. This is no snobbery. It is a fact and there are reasons.

## ADVICE

Imagine a painter working at his easel, say, in a park. A man comes along, regards him for a moment, then approaches him and says cheerfully, "I don't know anything about painting, sir, but would you be so kind and put more red in your sunset? Just a bit more, if you please?" If you were a spectator to this scene, it would all seem mad to you, yet this kind of madness goes on in radio even more cheerfully and on a gargantuan scale. The man who wants more red in the sunset is the sponsor. He wants more love in the script. He wants a shorter scene. He wants a longer scene. He wants more "action." He wants less "action." Who is this sponsor? What are his qualifications? What is he doing in the writer's room, anyway, and why doesn't someone throw the gentleman out? Why doesn't he take care of his ulcers or paranoia and let the writer write and who does he think he is anyhow?

He is the man with the money. He belongs. Don't argue.

The sponsor and advertising agency have taken over radio quietly in this matter of writing. Except for sustaining shows (often worthy, such as "Assignment Home") or special public service programs magnanimously aired after 11:30 P.M., the broadcasting company sells Time. It owns the air. It will sell you a piece. Period.

Now it is obvious to anyone who takes a morning off and listens to the procession of serials and soap operas parading as "drama" or even, heaven forbid, as "literature," that he is come upon a mediocrity of quarter-hours to stun a visitor from Mars, much less an earth-bound mortal. The visitor might well ask, "Is it all one story?," and you would explain, "No, they are different stories." And he would persist, "But they all sound the same. Am I mistaken?" and you would admit that he is not mistaken.

## Conform...Or Else

In most books, in most plays, in most poems, in most novels, the author is known by his personality. All art is an individual interpretation of experience. It is one man bringing forth a work solely his own, uniquely his own. But in radio, conformity is king! Why? Well, for one thing, the writer in radio is faced with a highly censorable and very "public" audience which the sponsor feels he must placate at all costs. The writer in radio faces an audience whose prejudices and mores are so diverse that he is forced to get at the

lowest common denominator in order to please all. He must use certain basic motivations and situations recognizable to all, acceptable to all, approved by all. Good is rewarded. Evil is not. And love always, forever, infinitely, must triumph. He has to write what everybody knows and what everybody has heard a thousand times. He must please. He must sell soap or penicillin or rugs. He must have everybody love everything in the story. It is often as grim as that. The problem is how to be dull and sell soap.

The excitement and illumination which comes with the exploration of human behavior is out of the question here. The ingredients of the Product are constant and measured. And shall the Script be otherwise? Radio writing, as it is now developed, is simply an adjunct of advertising. The word is fitted to the Product. The Product is God. Gentlemen, I contend this is hardly a condition for literature. It is a rat race.

## Program

Many writers are in radio for the same reason that many are in films. For money. There is nothing wrong in that. We are all interested in money. Even I am at times. But there are many writers in radio (and films) who are willing to work in it in the hope of developing a popular medium for what must surely be part of its purpose -- to instruct, to enlighten, to stir to action, to stir to beauty and to use the talent of writing as something more than moving a story from place to place for half an hour. They are willing to work in a glass house of madcap and magic which would drive less hardy souls into the ground.

What can be done?

Much. The war has given radio a shot in the arm and radio has done some wonderful things. It has spoken out and it can speak when it wants to -- boldly, proudly. It has put on a number of fine shows dealing with the war and the veteran particularly. But comes the peace -- then what? I submit the following conservative program to the men in the air-cooled rooms who run the kingdom of kilowatts (and some of them are very nice guys): 1. Get back some control over writing which is now almost exclusively in the hands of the sponsor and advertising agency. 2. Stop clipping the author on script rights. You know what I mean. 3. Repeat worthwhile plays. 4. Finally, and most important, let us have a wider outlet for non-commercial radio drama -- and pay for it.

## How About It?

By "non-commercial radio" I do not mean simply any sustaining series. I mean a non-format show, an experimental show, one which does not have limitations of content or form. Something like the old Columbia Workshop. I mean a half-hour each week on each network for a program of original radio plays. With or without music. With or without echo chambers or filters. With or without love in a cottage. In poetry or prose. Any way we please. No commercial and no strings. All we want is a piece of wavelength and your good auspices. Not as a seasonal replacement, but an all-year-round proposition. The present hit-or-miss, one-shot system is a phony. Nor does a new "Thirteen by Corwin" mean the millennium. Mr. Corwin's triumph has not saved his fellow-writers. How about a "thirteen by Thirteen?" Or "Twenty-six by Twenty-six?" The writers are here, and some good ones. How about setting the saga of Lux or the creaking door aside one half-hour per week per network? It might well usher in a renaissance in radio drama. How about it, NBC, CBS, American and Mutual? Put up or, as the saying quaintly goes, shut up. Prove

it, or forever hold your pronouncements about radio coming of age. We are nearing the middle of the twentieth century. Shall the singing commercial and the Lone Ranger inherit the earth?

(Mr. Rosten has received an American Academy of Arts and Letters grant for his writing in radio.)



## The Gentleman Believes in Realism

by Fred W. Hift (Reprinted from NY TIMES, Sunday, September 30, 1945)

To be a radio director is at best a lucrative and at worst a thankless job. No easy fame comes to the man in the control booth, whose name may be mentioned once or twice during the program, but whose voice, looks and personality remain a mystery to listeners. And yet a few of these directors, whose job it is to turn a typewritten script into a production, have managed to make a name for themselves through the skill with which they have worked the limited tools of their trade. One of these is Anton (Tony) Leader.

A young man for his position, he is only 32, with short-cropped hair and a deep, resonant voice that betrays the former radio announcer. He loves radio and lives it most of the day. A veteran of this war -- he trained as a transport pilot for nine months -- his early ambition oddly enough was to become a singer. While still pursuing his singing studies he got together with a group of amateur actors, who presented a series of plays over a Boston station. The series was a success and ran for two years.

### Versatile

Since then he has worked as announcer and production manager at Station WMCA, as a freelance actor in Cincinnati, as a soda jerker, a salesman, a professional blood-donor (that was when times were tough), as a director for CBS soap opera, and finally, when his big break came in 1939, as a staff director on NBC. At present he is directing a number of productions on Mutual.

When assigned to a new show Mr. Leader reserves the right to rewrite the script until it meets with his approval. Once his actors have been chosen, they all get together in a studio and, sitting informally around a table, the cast goes through their lines. He feels that by letting an actor present his own conception of the part he is about to play he not only makes his own job as a director more interesting but also permits his performer a wider range of self-expression.

### The Setting

Tony Leader is an ardent devotee of the realism school. Perhaps some listeners will remember one of the Words at War productions called "Silence of the Sea." Most of the script's action took place in the small living room of a French country house, a scene complete with the entrance door, a stairway leading to the next floor and several other rooms. Instead of turning the sound effects over to his sound man, he decided to let the

actors themselves go through the motions and produce the bulk of the necessary sound effects. The whole set was built up in the studio. When a character was supposed to open a door, he actually opened it. When he was supposed to walk up the stairs, he actually carried out the movement of mounting steps.

Of course, this called for a larger number of microphones, something like three for every one previously used, but the result of the experiment was gratifying to Mr. Leader. The actors seemed infused with new interest by being able to actually act their lines out with the help of their bodies, he said. The whole sound perspective changed, he believed, and what had been a flat, gray-in-gray performance became plastic and colorful and filled with the shades of reality so hard to achieve in radio.

## At Sea

In another instance the script called for the whole scene to play on a raft. Mr. Leader had a long table brought into the studio and made his actors sit and stand on this makeshift device throughout the program. Again the effects were far more realistic, he insists, than could have been achieved by having the players grouped around one microphone.

As a man interested in his industry's future, Mr. Leader believes that radio can be a new and powerful ally in the keeping of the peace. How can this be done effectively? Mr. Leader has a plan. He thinks the Government should appoint a board, broadly representative of American thought. This board then should assign educational topics to the networks, to be presented at a certain time of the day in whatever form they feel it would be most effective. There would be no interference with the program itself, except that it would have to carry the theme assigned by the board. This, Mr. Leader feels, would stimulate the kind of competition which results in better programs with higher educational values. [NOTE: Anton M. Leader later produced *Murder at Midnight* and *Suspense*.]



"In the late 1950s, William S. Paley invited Garbo to lunch, having suggested through an intermediary that he would like to discuss a CBS radio production of *Anna Karenina*. She would be invisible, a voice. But nothing came of it; Paley never even mentioned the project to her. Apparently he had only wanted to be seen in Garbo's company."

--WALKING WITH GARBO by Raymond Daum (1991), page 181.

"Marion Allen, a graduate of the Theatre Guild School, who appeared in the radio version of *"Little Women,"* is the latest addition to the cast of *"Buck Rogers,"* playing the part of Bundy, the girl from Saturn..." -- NY TIMES, Sunday, March 4, 1934.

"*"Skyscraper,"* a play by Lawrence Holcombe, depicting the thoughts of a man as he falls to death, will be broadcast on Tuesday at 2 P.M." -- NY TIMES, Sunday, Nov. 12, 1933.

"If any theory that radio will be dead in three years comes true, it is not unlikely that the coroner will rule suicide rather than murder by television."

--Val Adams, NY TIMES, Sunday, July 3, 1949.

## IN PRAISE OF THE MAINSTREAM DEALERS

When I have found fault with the presentation of mainstream OTR dealers' selection, I have detailed my objections, as I did in TUNE IN #8's opinion piece "Legacy of the Dealers" (reprinted in RADIO RECALL). So when I find myself cheering their presentation, I should praise their accomplishments with an equally loud voice. Which brings me to the latest installments of Adventures In Cassettes' and Radio Spirits' catalogs. These two companies are arguably the most prominent OTR dealers in the country, whose product is aimed mainly at the general public. Recently, their catalogs have become highly attractive publications, focusing on boxed sets of cassettes and compact discs. These sets not only feature interesting covers and quality sound, but some even contain long runs of consecutive episodes. Adventures In Cassettes, for example, has six Jack Benny sets that, together, give you every episode from November 30, 1947 to October 16, 1949, in consecutive order. Of course, the cost comes to 156 dollars when you could get a similar amount of shows from a lending-library for far less cash. The high prices are still the mainstream dealers' biggest drawback, but the attractive presentation of their boxed sets can more than make up for the price, depending on whether you really like the series or not. I'd gladly pay \$26 for a boxed set of Mollie Mystery Theatre [from Adventures In Cassettes], for example, with episodes I've not seen in too many lists, including SPERDVAC's, or \$30 for Radio Spirits' Mel Blanc Show set. Looking through AIC and RS's catalogs, I kept thinking that there should be a store, an audio-only Suncoast so to speak, selling all this stuff. Or, better yet, an audio Blockbuster-type place where the general public could rent them. Of course, there are currently many places where this product can be purchased: I was surprised to see the Zero Hour sets in AIC's catalog; I was even more surprised a few days later to see them on the shelf at the local Media Play store. And some video-rental stores have audiobooks for rent, a section of the videostore where OTR releases might also be found for rent.

Although neither AIC or RS offer similar sets for such worthwhile programs as Columbia/CBS Workshop or NBC University Theatre/Short Story or Mercury Theatre, they are offering other notable programs as well as ones likely to attract public interest because of their celebrity casts. In the latter category, I would include Jimmy Stewart as The Six-Shooter (AIC has two sets, or 24 episodes), Alan Ladd in Box 13, AIC's two Saint sets starring Vincent Price, Bold Venture, Rathbone and Bruce's Sherlock Holmes, and RS's Dragnet set. In the fine-art category, Radio Spirits is to be commended for offering some recent BBC dramas (Branagh's Shakespeare adaptations on CD, for example) and Welles' much-neglected Les Miserables from 1937, also on CD.

Adventures In Cassettes' address is 5353 Nathan Lane North, Plymouth, MN 55442-1978. Radio Spirits' catalog can be ordered by calling 1-800-723-4648 (or 1-800-RADIO-48). My congratulations to the two companies for their improved selection and presentation.

## **RADIO SPIRITS' "HERMIT'S CAVE" SET**

As proof of Radio Spirits improvement, I would also point to their remarkable "Hermit's Cave" set, available on six 90-minute tapes or nine 60-minute CDs (I went straight for the CDs, myself). Incredibly, the set contains 15 previously unknown episodes -- which accounts for their absence from the list of all known surviving H.C. episodes in TUNE IN #12. I therefore print a revised version of

### **ALL KNOWN SURVIVING HERMIT'S CAVE EPISODES:**

*[\* = episodes on Radio Spirits set]*

- \* "The Author of Murder" (ep. 15)
- \* "The Black Band"
- \* "The Black Crow Mine" (very poor sound)
- \* "Blackness of Terror"
- \* "Buried Alive"
- \* "Castle by the Sea" (1939?)
- \* "The Crimson Hand" (ep. 368; c. May, 1944?)
- \* "The Dark House" (15 minutes long)
- \* "Fever" (ep. 509)
- \* "From Another World" (ep. 294; 1940)
- \* "The Gypsy's Curse" (ep. 283)
- \* "Hanson's Ghost" (ep. 406; Feb. 1945?)
- \* "House of Murder"
- \* "House of Purple Shadows"
- \* "House on Lost Land's Bluff"
- \* "The House With A Past" (ep. 23)
- \* "It Happened on Sunday"
- \* "The Man With White Hair"
- \* "Mr. Randall's Discovery" (AFRS)
- \* "Mystery of the Thing" [AKA "Mystery of the Strange Thing"]
- \* "The Nameless Day"
- \* "Notebook on Murder" (1939 or 1940?)
- \* "Plantation Mystery" (ep. 410; 1942 or early March, 1945?)
- \* "The Professor's Elixir" (ep. 404; late Jan. 1945?)
- \* "Reflected Image (of the Desert)"
- \* "The Search For Life"
- \* "Spirit Vengeance"
- \* "The Spirits of Vengeance"
- \* "The Story Without End"
- \* "The Vampire's Desire"

Not surprisingly, the information on the boxed set makes no mention of the long-running WJR version, instead repeating what is found in John Dunning's *Tune Into Yesterday*, which says that the series ran only from 1940 to 1943. Perhaps the forthcoming new edition of Dunning's book will have more complete information on the series. At least one of the episodes in the H.C. boxed set appears to be from the WJR version: "Reflected Image" (titled "Reflected Image of the Desert" on the box) features a deep-voiced actor who regularly appeared on another Detroit-based show, *The Green Hornet*, and on *The Lone Ranger*.

I have included in the middle of this issue, and on the cover, what WJR has sent me regarding this series. Brett Riggs provided me with the obituary clipping of Toby Gremmer. My thanks also to collector Gene Bradford who spoke with Rube Weiss who worked at WJR in 1941. Mr. Weiss said that "he was sure that the show was transcribed in Chicago because the very last thing before going on



the air, Eric Howlett always checked to see if the line to Chicago was open and that they (Chicago) were ready to record." Perhaps this might explain how the Illinois-based Radio Spirits acquired a slew of previously unknown Hermit's Cave shows. Incidentally, the shows in the RS set do not have commercials or the typical announcement of the episode number and next week's title at the end of the show.

#### RANDOM GAGA

This issue features several comments about "The Witch's Tale" which I've wanted to print for over a year. The comments about whether Adelaide Fitzallen was Alonzo Deen Cole's wife or not appears to be resolved by the information on our back cover, circa 1935, sent in by Dixon Chandler. The photo in the center of the page shows Alonzo Deen Cole, Marie O'Flynn, and -- in the background -- Old Nancy, witch of Salem (presumably Adelaide Fitz-Allen in this photo). It seems that Marie O'Flynn was Cole's first wife (not Fitzallen) and that she played the lead female roles (not the host, Nancy). My thanks also to Dave Siegel for the page I've reprinted listing some Witch's Tale episodes.

The Fibber McGee and Molly script originally scheduled for this issue will instead appear in NARA NEWS. NARA's address is 134 Vincewood Dr., Nicholasville, KY 40356.

There is a new Spider-Man audio-dramatization tape available now, made especially for tape, not radio.

BBC Radio recently presented a new 6-part Doctor Who serial.

The 1950s Australian sci-fi radio series Rocky Starr ("Flying Saucers" storyline) was shown on BBC2-TV with actors lipsynching the radio voices and with songs added to the story.

On Sept 5 and 7, 1995, CBC's *Morningside* (10 a.m.) aired a radio adaptation of Margaret Atwood's *The Robber Bride*. On Sept. 10, the play was re-aired on CBC's *Sunday Showcase* at 10 p.m. The radioplay was briefly advertised on CBC-TV.

CBC Radio recently presented a 3-part adaptation of Margaret Atwood's novel *The Edible Woman*. The following week, a drama about Jackie Robinson was aired.

The Chattanooga OTR Club's newsletter, *Chattanooga Airwaves*, ran a page recently announcing the formation of a "One Man's Family" fan club. For more information, contact either Mike Sprague (9936 NE 197th St, Bothell, WA 98011) or Gary Polich (4611 NE 110th, Seattle, WA 98125). The Chattanooga OTR Club, by the way, can be reached by contacting Bob Axley, 4940 Bal Harbor Dr., Chattanooga, TN 37416.

The USA Cable TV network has been airing episodes of the 1960s Superman cartoon which featured the voice of Bud Collyer and other old-time radio actors, weekday mornings at seven.

-- Rob Imes, Editor.

---

**TUNE IN**, published by Rob Imes. Issue #16, August 1996. Subscriptions are \$9.00 for 6 issues; please make checks payable to Rob Imes. All material in this issue is Copyright its respective creator(s) and/or Copyright holders. Letters received by TUNE IN will be considered for publication. Rob Imes, 1844 East Longmeadow, Trenton, MI 48183



PINCHOT

### • ROSAMOND PINCHOT

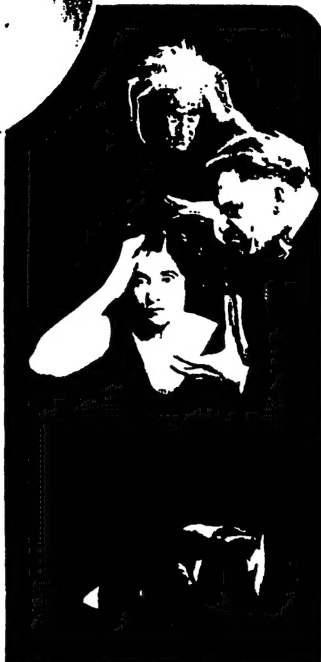
At seventeen Rosamond Pinchot of New York played the first of seven hundred performances in "The Miracle."

After touring with that show in Budapest, Vienna and Prague, she returned to America and acted in stock companies. On her second trip to Europe she played German parts with Max Reinhardt.

Her first broadcast was for Al Smith's presidential campaign in "Up from the City Streets," following which she enacted the role of Vivian Ware. During Roosevelt's campaign she spoke for him over stations and networks. For a year she took part in a WOR psychology program.

She has ridden in national horse shows all over the country and has competed in important swimming races.

Hollywood has recognized her charm and talent with a role in "The Three Musketeers."



ALONZO DEEN COLE MARIE O'FLYNN

### • ALONZO DEEN COLE and MARIE O'FLYNN

Alonzo Deen Cole of St. Paul received his education while traveling through the West with his family. He played the boy lead in "The Dummy" and later appeared in "Very Good, Eddie," "Pitter Patter," "Daddy Long Legs," "The Boomerang," "Synthetic Sin" and "Mr. Wu."

Featured comedy roles in musical and dramatic stock companies in Maine, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York were followed by a season of American farce in Paris.

After several years in vaudeville, he adapted for radio "Darling" and "Dearie," the characters of one of his acts, and followed this series by his popular Witch's Tale for Sachs Furniture Company on WOR.

His wife, Marie O'Flynn, leading lady in this program, has appeared on the stage since childhood, and Broadway has seen her in many musical successes.

The part of the old witch, Nancy, was played by the late Adelaide Fitz-Allen, the well-known character actress, who appeared in productions with Ellen Terry, Walter Hampden and Alice Brady.

John MacBryde, born in Troy, New York, played juveniles in local stock company. Engagements under the Shubert and Selwyn banners followed a role in "De Luxe Annie." He has portrayed over five hundred characters, including parts in "Within the Law," "Common Clay," "The Palsy," "The Show-Off," "The Family Upstairs," "The Old Soak," "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," "The Cat and the Canary," "Broken Wing," "The Gorilla," "The Whole Town's Talking," "So This Is London," "Laff That Off," "Boomerang," "Girl Trouble," "Spread Eagle," "A Free Soul," "Broadway," "What Anne Brought Home," "Kongo," "Queen High," "Bringing Up Father," "Is Zat So?" and many others.

He has toured throughout the country with his own vaudeville presentations, and George M. Cohan made a full-length play from his sketch, "The Meanest Man in the World."

In 1928 he became a featured member of the Eveready players on Station WEAJ, and since then has been heard in fifteen hundred radio characterizations in the following program: Great Northern, True Detective Stories, Philco, Blackstone, Majestic, Westinghouse, True Romance, Physical Culture, Arabesque, Time, Dixie Circus Evening in Paris, Campus, Charlie Chan, Death Valley Days, Sherlock Holmes, Danger Fighters, Orange Lantern, the Goldbergs, 20,000 Years in Sing Sing, Eno Crime Clues, the Gibson Family, Palmolive, Cities Service RCA-Victor, Warden Lawes and the Ben.

JOHN MACBRYDE

